



July 8, 2015

Council President Herb Wesson
City of Los Angeles
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Council President Wesson,

Good day! We are one of the 1,000 plus owners of properties located in Downtown Los Angeles. We are asking you to consider a number of problems with the proposed sidewalk vending program.

Presently, there are already about 50,000 unlicensed street vendors in Los Angeles. They do not have to worry about compliance with laws, public safety, minimum wage or overhead expenses such as rent, license fees, utilities, or worker's compensation, to name a few. In Downtown LA, they normally set up their businesses in front of stores selling the same type of merchandise and steal their customers. This hurts legal small businesses that cannot compete with the street vendors price-wise. For the past couple of years, a lot of small businesses had to close down resulting to laid-off employees and vacant stores. This, in turn, affects property owners who will have a number of vacancies and will still have to pay mortgage, utilities and keep up of the property.

Aside from this, we also encounter problems such as counterfeit items, illegal animal sales and unsafe food preparations. They also leave a lot of trash in front of stores that we have to take care of! We pay monthly service fees to trash companies to keep our properties clean and in compliance with City laws. They use our dumpsters and we end up paying extra for trash which do not belong to us or our tenants.

Right now, we already have an average of 80+ food trucks in the area. This is legal but the City does not have control over how many trucks are allowed in a certain place, where they can set up and their time of operation. The food trucks leave very little room on the sidewalks, which in turn gives the pedestrians no choice but to use the streets, which is very dangerous. Given the current situation, how can the City still allow street vending?



We would like to request that you seek stricter regulations on street vending and food trucks. Should the City still consider street vending, may we please ask you to take a moment and take into account the following:

1. The street vendors should have their own place where they can set up and not make the sidewalks narrower than it is.
2. There should be a limit on the number of street vendors and food trucks allowed in a certain area.
3. They should have their own liability insurance and pay their permit fees to the City so this program can be properly enforced.
4. They have to pay fees for trash removal and be responsible for clean-up of their own space.
5. Food safety should be one of the primary concerns for those selling food. If they do not have permit, they should not be allowed to do their business.
6. The neighborhoods should have a say on this program before we allow street vendors in the area.

Downtown Los Angeles is a pedestrian friendly area with stores offering various products from toys to jewelry. We need to provide the consumers with a nice, clean and safe environment. The problems with trash and blocked sidewalks will prevent them from coming back. The legal small businesses are the ones making Downtown LA thrive and we need to support them to keep them in business. Allowing street vending in the area will not only eradicate these small businesses, but will kill Downtown LA as well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ray Golbari".

Ray Golbari
President

Handwritten initials in black ink, possibly "TS" or "TS:".

cc: Jose Huizar